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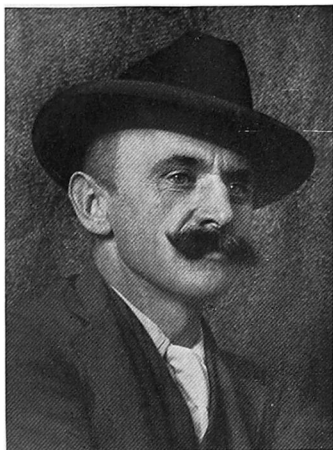
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CHARLES P. GRUPPE, PAINTER

One of the most promising of the younger American artists, and one who has won recognition both at home and abroad, is Charles P. Gruppe, for several years a close student and an indefatigable worker in Europe, and now a temporary resident at The Hague, Holland. Gruppe has for eleven years been a sort of voluntary exile from home in the interest of his art, though it is his intention shortly to return to America.



CHARLES P. GRUPPE
From a Photograph

Having lived abroad so many years, he is comparatively little known in America except as a contributor to various prominent exhibitions. He has been represented at different times in the displays shown by the leading institutions in New York, Philadelphia, and other art centers, and his work has uniformly commanded favorable notice from press and critic. He had one picture, "Wet Weather at The Hague," in the galleries at the Pan-American Exposition, and will have other canvases at the coming exhibition at the Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia, and at other American exhibitions.

Before referring to the character of Gruppe's work, a few words should be said of his birth and art education. Essentially he is a self-made man, and herein lie both his strength and his weakness as a painter—a certain self-reliance and strength, and at the same time a proneness to follow if not to imitate masters. Gruppe was born in Picton, Canada, September 3, 1860, of German parents. He early showed a marked talent for painting, and devoted himself to making studies direct from nature. In these early efforts he was fairly successful, and partly through force of circumstances and partly through choice, he did not seek any special academic training in his chosen profession. His studies from nature naturally centered his attention on landscape, and it is this specialized form of his art in which he has been most successful.

Family associations doubtless emphasized in his mind the rank and importance of German and Dutch art, and determined him in leaving America for a period of study and work in Europe. In 1890 he went to Holland, where he devoted himself assiduously to the



NOVEMBER SKIES

By Charles P. Gruppe

study of the great Dutch masters. The art of Holland found a responsive chord in his heart, and the people and scenery of the Netherlands struck his fancy, with the result that he virtually became a Dutchman in everything but political allegiance. He made The Hague his home, and with this city as his headquarters explored the



HOLLAND WINDMILL

By Charles P. Gruppe
From a Water-Color

surrounding country and made sketches and studies of the places that appealed to him as fit subjects for pictorial display.

It was the good fortune of Gruppe, early in his residence in Holland, to command the attention of the queen by his work. She bought one of his aquarelles which was hung in an exhibition, and some time later pur-

chased another of his pictures, an oil. This act of royal patronage gave the young artist a certain standing among his confrères, and he was admitted as a member into the greatest painters' clubs of Holland. Before leaving this country he became a member of the New York Water-Color Club and of the Salmagundi Club, New York, and it was not long after he had crossed the Atlantic that he became a member also of the Society of Dutch Painters and the Kunst Kring, The Hague, and the Arti Amicitiae, Amsterdam.

The influence of these favorable connections soon manifested itself. Gruppe had the benefit of personal contact with the best present-day painters of the Netherlands, and from them he received inspiration, if not guidance. Besides, to have the queen

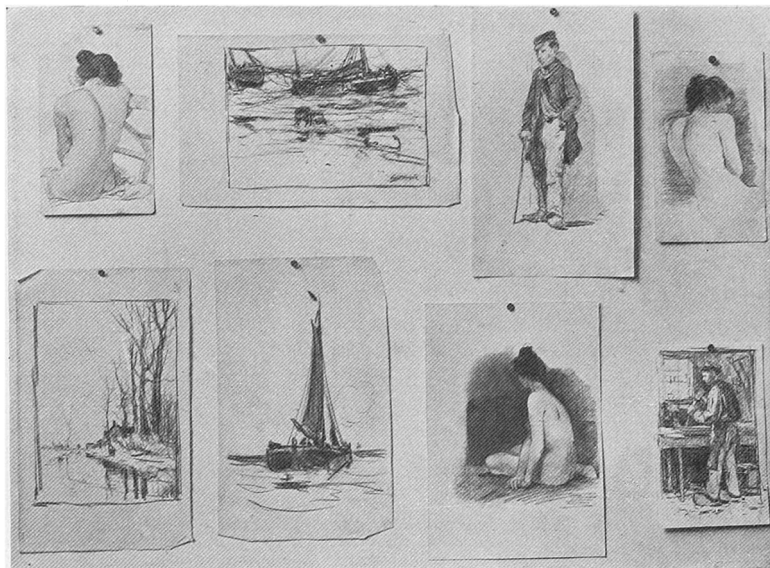


SKETCH AT KATWYK

By Charles P. Gruppe

mother, as she is commonly called, as a patron is deemed no small honor, and the fact that two of Gruppe's paintings were hung in the royal palace gave him rank among his associates, and tended to stimulate his ambition to excel.

During the last two or three years he has regularly exhibited at the Paris Salon, his painting "November Skies" eliciting the most favorable comment in the Parisian critical journals. The same picture was later shown at the Salon in Brussels. At the Glass Palace



SKETCHES AND STUDIES

By Charles P. Gruppe

in Munich his paintings "Auf dem Landwege" and "Schelpenfischer" commanded equally favorable notice. In Amsterdam, Berlin, and other art centers his works found admittance to exhibitions, and in many instances commanded ready sale. It may be said, in passing, that Gruppe is represented at the Art Museum in Detroit and the Art Club in Boston.

When Gruppe took up his temporary residence in Holland, he entered an environment peculiarly fitted for the development of his abilities. He had inherited from his parents a German if not a Dutch bent of mind, and he had had early instilled in him a love for the quaint life of the German and Dutch cities. To step, therefore, from

the New World, in which his boyhood and early youth had been spent, to the older, more settled, and more quiet cities of Holland was, in a sense, like going home, and much of the success that has attended Gruppe's efforts is due to the fact that his new surroundings were congenial to him, and he found in his Dutch environment the elements necessary for his development, which he might not have found in America.

His work is all characterized by good taste and a fresh naturalism; but what is more to the point, he has studied the peoples and landscapes of the Netherlands sympathetically, and has viewed people and



IN NORTH BRABANT

By Charles P. Gruppe

country with as correct a vision and with as deep an interpretative sense as a native-born Dutchman. In other words, he was not attracted by what to a stranger would be the picturesque novelties of the old Dutch towns. Crag and castle had no special charm for him, neither had uniqueness of manners nor oddity of costume. He mingled with the people, became one of them, entered into their spirit, and lived the life of the Netherlands before he undertook to depict it on canvas.

I said above that his lack of academic art training is responsible for both his excellence and his defects as a painter. It is to be credited to him as an excellence that he has maintained himself free from the mannerisms and technical peculiarities of the schools. On

the other hand, there is manifest in Gruppe's work a certain vacillation, which many critics have termed a lack of individual style. It is often said that he has been strongly influenced by Mauve and Du Chattel, to the extent that he reflects the style and manner of these artists. If this be true, it can scarcely be taken as a charge against the young artist.

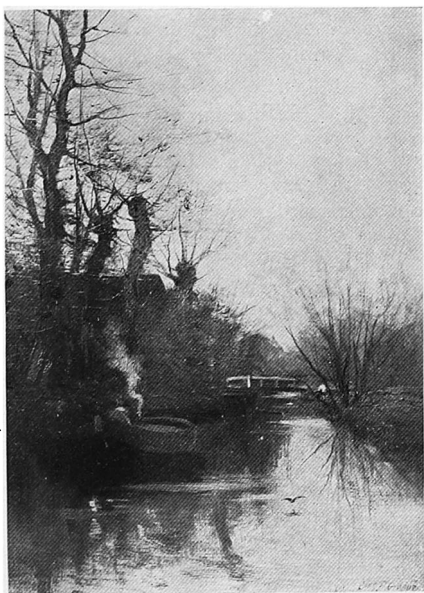
A friendly Dutch critic has pointed out the fact that had it not been for Rembrandt, Holland would not have had a Maas, a Flinck, a Fabritius, or an Israels. One would scarcely regard it as a reflec-



INTERIOR, NORTH BRABANT
By Charles P. Gruppe

tion on these later artists that they profited by the art of their illustrious predecessor, and neither can it be taken as a reflection on Gruppe if he has taken hints from Mauve and Du Chattel, or even followed their methods or sought to duplicate their effects.

The essential thing is, that Gruppe has learned the Dutch life thoroughly, and whatever he does, he undertakes to depict that life in a straightforward, honest way. He has the qualities that make his art popular. Whether, therefore, we, with some critics, ascribe to him genius, or, with others, mere talent, his work is of the kind that strikes a popular chord, that claims the admiration and elicits the support of the public.



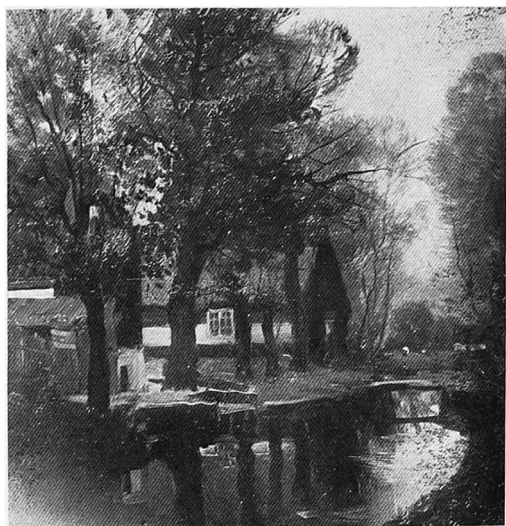
AT LOOSDUYNEN
By Charles P. Gruppe

desired effects in his canvases as has any other aspirant for honors with the brush.

He is not one of the painters who claim to dream an effect over-night, and dash it off, true to their vision, in the early hours of the morning. He labors long and arduously, and rather glories in admitting it, but he is yet clever enough to cover up the traces of his toil

As a colorist, Gruppe is as genuinely Dutch as he is in the interpretation of the people and country. His canvases are for the most part comparatively low-keyed, but his tones are clear and distinct, and his color schemes are harmonious and pleasing. His work is not labored, but has the quality of suggesting noble spontaneity. His perspectives are true, and his atmospheric effects essentially natural.

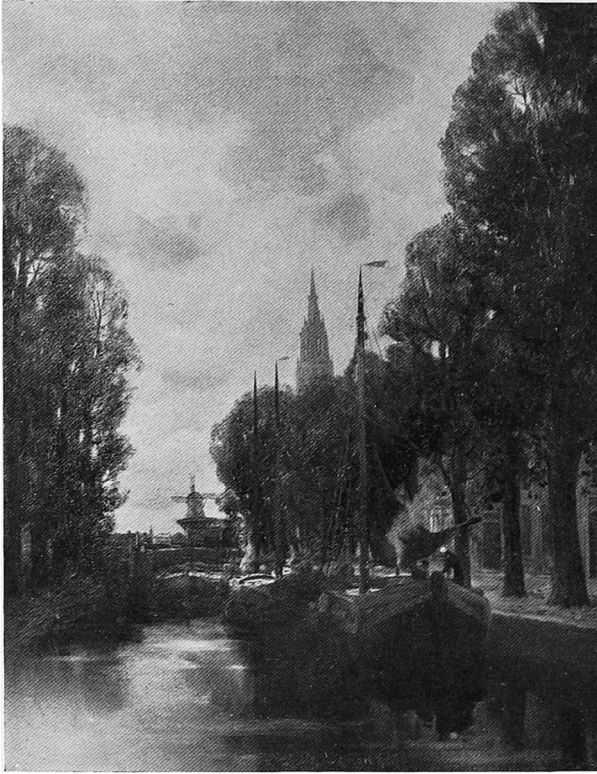
It has been said that much of the effectiveness of art lies in disguising the means employed to produce a given result. There is no royal road to success in art any more than in business. Gruppe has labored as long and as painfully for



NEAR THE HAGUE
By Charles P. Gruppe

and travail, so that his finished works stand forth as perfect reflections of his subjects, with as little as possible to suggest his own cleverness, or the trouble he has experienced in obtaining the desired results.

The accompanying illustrations will give some idea of the bent of



IN OLD DELFT
By Charles P. Gruppe

Gruppe's mind and of the breadth of his interests. Primarily he is a landscape-painter, and while he has done no inconsiderable amount of figure-work of high quality, it is landscape-painting in which he chiefly excels. It may be said here that many landscapists who are eminently successful in catching the elusive spirit of a scene fail lamentably when they undertake to paint figures in their pictures. Gruppe knows how to give life and human interest to his canvases by



OUTGOING FISHING-BOATS, KATWYK

By Charles P. Gruppe

using figures, and he knows how and where to paint them so as to produce the best effects.

With the merely decorative or pretty, Gruppe has little sympathy. He can find more beauty within his comprehension and his power of depiction in a simple village scene, a stretch of lowland country, a coast scene with its fishing-smacks, a day with peculiar atmospheric conditions, than in the grandest scenery or the most pretentious of human events. In a word, he is not tragic or theatrical, not enamored of the grand or the unique, but simple in his taste and direct in his art.

Dutch painters as a whole enjoy a peculiar celebrity among the world's artists. In the opinion of competent critics their work ranks as high as that of any other nation, and Gruppe doubtless followed a wise policy when he temporarily exiled himself, reveled among the masterpieces of the old Dutch painters, and buried himself in the life of the Netherlands of to-day.

It is commonly said that no artist can go to a foreign country and interpret its life and nature with the truth and force of a native-born artist. I do not contend that Gruppe has done or can do this for Holland; but I do maintain that his bent of mind is essentially Dutch,

that his long residence in the Netherlands has made him intimately familiar with the people and the country, and that his interpretation and rendering of Netherlands scenes more nearly approximate those of the better known present-day Dutch masters than do the efforts of any foreign-born artist with whom I am familiar who has undertaken to put on canvas the peculiar life of the Lowlands.

In considering the work of Gruppe, it should be borne in mind that his art is comparatively young. One may reasonably expect that he will develop an individual style which will be suggestive only of Gruppe; that the influence of Mauve and Du Chattel will be wholly outgrown. That he is an earnest, ambitious worker, that he is self-reliant and resourceful, that he is a good draftsman and has a fine sense of color, no one will gainsay. His future, therefore, I regard as assured; and when he has developed all his latent abilities, one may reasonably expect him to be ranked among the best exponents of Dutch life.

JAN VAN RYN.



NOVEMBER DAY
By Charles P. Gruppe